

OFFICIAL DISPATCH

VIA: Air
SPECIFY AIR OR SEA ROUTE

DISPATCH NO.: MGL-A-507

CLASSIFICATION

DATE: 3 October 1949

TO : Chief, Foreign Branch X
FROM : Chief of Station, Karlsruhe
SUBJECT: General - Operational
Specific - ODEUM Personnel - Otto Albrecht Alfred
Baron von BOLSCHWING
REF : MGL-A-448

MICROFILMED
MAY 29 1963
DOC. MICRO. SER.

1. In MGL-A-448 we referred extensively to von BOLSCHWING's role in ODEUM's Austrian show and in general to his position in Austria in or out of ODEUM. Although we consider it likely that there is biographical data available in Washington on this character, we recently requested him to write us a short autobiography. The attached document was subsequently prepared by him.

2. We would like to request the return of the three notarized photostats and the "Urkunde", which we have promised to give back to the owner.

INDEX

Dist:
2 - FBM (with attachments)
1 - COS (")
2 - File

MDR

Kal h... 3 Oct. 1949

DATE 31 FEB 1956

CLASSIFICATION

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)
(2)(A) Privacy ☐
(2)(B) Methods/Sources ☒
(2)(G) Foreign Relations ☐

Classified and Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 2001, 2005

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

COPY

SECRET

17 September 1949

STATEMENT ON LIFE HISTORY

I, Otto Albrecht Alfred Baron von Bolschwing, was born on 15 October 1909 at Schoenbrunn (formerly Germany now Poland respectively Soviet Union) as fifth child (second son) of Richard Otto Wilhelm Ferdinand Baron von Bolschwing, born 7 May 1863, and Ella Julia Mathilda nee Baroness von Mollen, born 12 April 1873.

1909-1921

My father owned a large estate which by inheritance in 1921 went to my older brother Carl Ludwig Richard, born 27 February 1899, and his wife Thais nee Countess Luders Weymarn, a relative to the late czar of Russia. At the outbreak of world war I my father volunteered for the army and was killed in action on the Russian front as captain (cavellery) on 30 October 1914. Since my mother-to whose estate I was destined to succeed-was responsible for my education. The fortunes as invested in land have been seized by the Soviet Union and Poland respectively after World War II. I was privately schooled at home until 1921.

1921-1932

From 1921 to 1926 I went to a public school in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) where I completed exams in 1926. After completing school I went to England and took law courses at London University. During the same time I was apprentice with a shipping firm belonging to the Royal Mail Steamship Company (Lloyd Bilbao). In 1928 I joined the East Asia Trading House C. Illies Company in Hamburg and stayed there until 1930. During same period I also took law courses at Hamburg University. From summer 1930 to 1931 I was manager to the Oberon Investment and Development Company both in Berlin and Vienna (at that time this firm had far reaching international financial connections). At the same time I acquired a lime factory in Upper Silesia (Upper Silesian Lime and Cement Works, Ltd., a firm registered in London). From 1931 I represented the investment interests of several promoting and investment houses in London on the continent, especially in Central and South East Europe.

1932-1937

Since I had been destined for diplomatic service, my education and family connections eased matters in that direction, and after a banking course with the Bank für Industrieobligationen (1932), I was entrusted with the negotiations in Bulgaria for the erection of automatic telephones and other industrial development in the Balkans and Asia Minor, both with international finance and diplomatic support. As from that time my connections with the Foreign Office were close, and from then on I commenced intelligence work on economical and political matters. Owing to these connections I concluded an agreement with the Foreign Office for the recovery of a hidden treasure from world war I in Palestine. At the same time Hitler assumed power in Germany. I was informed by the Foreign Office that important members of the Nazi party also tried to arrange for a search for said treasure and was advised not to reenter Germany.

SECRET

A-7 / To 2001-507

225

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

SECRET

When I eventually reached Palestine in fall 1933 - previously I had been in Australia, where owing to currency regulations the telephone deal had fallen through - I was described as a semi-official of the German Foreign Office. For legal reasons I had to wait for 13 months until I could complete my agreement with the Mandatory Power in Palestine (the one involved was supposedly the entire case held by the "middle powers" in the Near East, and should have amounted to 2,000,000. Lstr. and Turkish Pounds in gold coin). Up to 1935 I was not directly molested, by that time however I was informed that most likely a trip to Germany would not mean any danger. I had formed an own Trading company (Arensch Company) to be able to find in practice what trade possibilities existed, at the same time advising the Foreign Office on desirable steps in trade. When I reentered Germany in summer 1935 I found that especially the foreign organization (Auslandsorganisation) of the NSDAP was trying to prevent any connection between me and German industries. I was advised to arrange matters with the NSDAP by clandestinely becoming an "old member" which was made possible by a former servant of our family, then holding an important position with the NSDAP. He arranged for a predated entry (1932) and I got a membership number of 934212. Against hope this step did not pacify matters in the least. I was under threat of being arrested and fled Germany in December 1935. From abroad I myself tried to straighten matters out, my friends tried the same in Germany, and it appeared that no difficulties would arise in the future.

1937-1939

When I reentered on advise in 1937, I found, that the party still tried to "get me" (reasons they gave, were my international antinazi connections). In the meantime most of my former friends in Foreign Office had been released from office, and they strictly advised me, for safety reasons, to establish an independent economical position. The reason that I did return to Germany at all, was, that my property was still there which I tried to remove. With the support of my banking connections I passed the exam as foreign exchange counsellor in February 1938. In the meantime my friends had arranged for me ka contact with two ranking SS officers, one in economy and one in intelligence, who were willing to supply protection against "payment". Although the party still tried to intervene with any step I did, this protection proved strong enough to give me cover. it proved even successful, when in winter 1937/38, I for the first time was arrested by Gestapo. In March 1938 I married Brigitte Klenzendorff, out of this marriage a son was born in July 1939 (Gisbert Otto Richard Ernst), the marriage was divorced in 1942. In December 1938 I received a passport and travelled to America to try to find an economical background for my emigration. After my return, I first had to wait for the child's birth and arranged matters for a transfer of my capital, but was held up by the outbreak of world war II.

1939-1942

My reputation as an expert on Balkan and Near East questions followed me up, foreign office found no objection against my person, and again with the help of the above mentioned SS officers (one was bribed heavily by me) I was placed as chief of political intelligence with the German Legation in Bucharest (Rumania). My antinazi connections strictly advised me to accept, because they feared for my

REST AVAILABLE COPY

safety in Germany and secondly political reasons were obvious. To support my position my banking connections offered me the vice-presidency of the Germano-Rumanian Chamber of Commerce, which I also accepted (from this I was forced to resign by Gestapo in 1942). Shortly after my arrival in Rumania, the LSDAP started opposition against my nomination, however with no success at that time. I remained as member of the Diplomatic Corps in Rumania until 1941 (February). During this period I had ample opportunity to counteract Nazi measures both on the political and economical line. To ensure unobstructed travelling, apart from being a member of the diplomatic corps, I had the right to wear the uniform of an SS captain. However, as was later found during Gestapo investigation, I have not been a legal member of the SS, which they presumed in the beginning. My aim, agreed upon with my circle, was to especially prevent the germanizing of Rumanian industries (oil and heavy industries) and to block Nazi influence from important political positions, also to win the faith of the then ruling circle with the German Foreign Office. My connections were especially strong with the Rumanian Iron Guard, where I was able to prevent practically any direct contacts and influences of the LSDAP. After the insurrection in January 1941, where I had singly supported the Iron Guard against combined German Foreign Office and Army interests (which were vested in Antonescu), I was called back from Rumania. With tremendous luck I had corrupted high ranking Nazis by making them support Iron Guardists, which eventually saved my neck, since I had already been destined for immediate execution by Heydrich. I had sufficient time to contact my circle, who through channels for some time influenced Goering and Himmler in this matter - the affair eventually led to a breach that lasted for months between German political intelligence and Ribbentrop, and to a cutting out of the Foreign Office from active intelligence work. In March 1941 I was sent to Sofia (Bulgaria) to secure the safe transport of remaining ranking Iron Guardists from Rumania, who, if caught, were mostly executed by Antonescu's government. In Sofia I was informed that I was chosen as chief of intelligence in Northern Greece after its occupation, the war had just been declared on Greece by Germany. The group which I was supposed to command was flown to Sofia and from there I reached Salonica with the spearhead of intruding German troops. The written order was made out by the German High Command, a copy which I kept for the future was taken from me, when I was arrested in 1942 together with all papers pertaining to any activity. I found that the "work" consisted of mainly arresting Greek personalities on force of a wanted list, who were then interned. When after one week of arrest no further orders arrived, I protested against arrests without screening, for that I was severely rebuked. I protested again and asked for my immediate release, where to I did not receive an answer. About the 10 May 41 (the invasion of Greece had commenced at the beginning of April 1941) I managed to see Himmler in Athens and asked for my discharge, which was granted. My argumentation ran on the line that work entrusted to me was a police matter of which I had no knowledge. I returned to Berlin and with the help of members of my circle established an even closer contact with SS General Jost, at that time chief of Office VI (foreign intelligence). I persuaded him to assign me to an intelligence operation directed Jost, and left for Holland in August 1941. Again with the help of my circle I started to build a line of contact to the British and to contact German intelligence.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

When Gest fell in disgrace in fall 1941 I tried to persuade him to follow me west and to surrender, he halfheartedly agreed. I tried to arrange for the safety of the next of my kin, who in such case would have been persecuted, by arranging an outlet to Switzerland. Prior to completing these plans - who had to be followed with extreme care - for reasons still unknown to me I was called back to Berlin, and at least from that time (December 10, 1941) was under Gestapo supervision. I could however again win time by bringing medical certificates showing that I would have to undergo an operation.

1942-1945

My circle informed me that this time there seemed little hope for my safety, they advised me to volunteer in the Army, which I refused. From the beginning of 1942 I was under medical treatment and had two operations performed on me, which kept me in hospital until July 1942. After a recuperation leave I returned to Vienna where I was arrested on 8 September 1942 by Gestapo. Under heavy guard I was transferred to Berlin, where I was imprisoned at the cellar prison at Gestapo Headquarters in single confinement, for the major time until April 1943. My first interrogation commenced after three months, in the meantime I was practically starved - when I left prison (although during the last two months I had much better food) I weighed 52 kilos, entering prison with 36 kilos. Bodily and mental pressure was terrific, but since I did not give up, and Gestapo did not find any facts - last but not least since my circle did everything in the way of bribery and persuasion - I was released. During the investigation it was found that, as already mentioned, I held no real SS membership and that my party membership was also "somehow mysterious". I was informed, when released, that I would be under supervision, but had to fear nothing as long as I worked for German victory. After recovery of health I, with the help of my circle, got a position as manager of the Austrian branch of a pharmaceutical firm, that had strong connections with Abwehr. On several later occasions an Abwehr officer, who was paid a monthly salary for such help, confirmed that I was indispensable for Abwehr operations. In reality nothing existed in that line apart from the payment to his benefit, and that I provided cover for a French girl friend of his with our factory. Through my economical position I could save several members of our group, declaring them - again with subversive support - as essential for industry. When in February 1945 I was again summoned to Gestapo Vienna, the Abwehr officer for the last time was able to intervene on my behalf. Shortly afterwards I was once more arrested but released against a bribe of 10,000 marks. I then fled with my wife - I had married on 12 October 1943 Ruth von Pfaundler; my wife and her parents were racially persecuted, her father held an important government position prior to 1933, and after 1945 took same up again - and there worked with the branch of the same resistance circle ("mx05"). In April 1945 I was caught on a sabotage mission by a German Army detachment but managed to flee at the last moment. My achievements in the interest of Austria were rewarded with the Austrian honor certificate on 8 May 1945.

From the moment of arrival of US troops in Tyrol both, my wife and myself, as the first SS after years could feel free again. I was also in a position to assist the United States of

-3-

America, and hope together with my wife, to one day become a worthy citizen of the US.

My political ideas were not on a not nationalistic but European basis, any small scale nationalism (chauvinism), to my mind, is antihistorical; I further saw and still see no chance of individual European nationalism in a moral fight against attacking world communism.

/s/ Otta A. A. Baron V Bolschwing

BEST AVAILABLE COPY